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ABSTRACT

Suggested are some principles of developing energy conservation programs where retarded persons might be particularly affected, ways to conserve energy, and pertinent references. It is thought that the retarded, particularly the retarded in institutions, are more likely to suffer from energy conservation measures than members of the larger population. Among principles stated is the necessity to assess programatic needs, medical needs, and the usual activity level of the retarded person(s) being served. Ways to conserve energy are given such as assigning a team of a retarded person and a staff member to monitor simple energy conservation measures of checking thermostat settings and light switches. Nine books, guidelines, or other sources of information are given (addresses are included). (MC)

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American Association on Mental Deficiency

ENERGY CONSERVATION AND MENTALLY RETARDED CITIZENS

Introduction

Whether the need is immediate or long-range, certainly we all have to think, plan, and act to conserve the remaining reservoirs of energy-producing materials.

Now that there seems to be a special urgency to reduce energy consumption and to share the necessary sacrifices, those of us with a responsibility for the lives of others who are uniquely vulnerable must be particularly vigilant. This is especially true of us in the membership of AAMD, who serve our mentally retarded fellow-citizens. We must be careful not to permit those whom we serve to bear a disproportionate burden because of their handicaps; neither should we seek to have them excused from sharing the burden simply because they are retarded.

Many retarded people, especially some of those living in institutions, may suffer more because of some energy conservation measures than members of the general population. To an extent, this greater suffering can be seen as shared by non-retarded persons in similar settings, such as by residents of facilities for the aged and for the physically disabled. It is our responsibility as professionals serving handicapped citizens to guard against this greater suffering, which might take the form of reduced access to community-based programs and services because of the unavailability of gasoline, or of higher likelihood of secondary illness because of curtailment of fuel for heating large areas and running laundry and sanitary facilities.

On the other hand, most retarded people are as able as their non-retarded neighbors to share in energy conservation. This is particularly true of those many retarded citizens who have been able to establish independent lives. It is our responsibility as professionals to assist those who can share the sacrifice to understand how and why this must be done.

Perhaps the best way we can accomplish the objectives of sharing energy conservation equitably and to the detriment of none is to begin establishing an awareness of the means of conservation in general, and in specific to consider how conservation measures can affect both the very susceptible and the very capable in the community of retarded citizens. To this end, the AAMD Energy Task Force has prepared this brief document, consisting of three more parts:

I - SOME PRINCIPLES OF DEVELOPING ENERGY CONSERVATION PROGRAMS WHERE RETARDED PERSONS MIGHT BE PARTICULARLY AFFECTED;

II - A FEW SUGGESTIONS FOR CONSERVING ENERGY;

III - A SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY OF CONSERVATION MATERIALS.

To some extent, the principles, suggestions, and bibliography relate more to facilities in which concentrations of retarded people might be expected to reside; this is because of the particular vulnerabilities which are more likely, for example, in large-scale institutions, and because AAMD members who are in such settings are more likely to be directly responsible for those aspects of retarded persons' lives which require energy conservation (e.g., heating of living areas). Nonetheless, this whole document should be reviewed, and used as appropriate.

One further thing. We are interested in feedback about this attempt by AAMD to keep up with the needs of the times, and in the experiences of our members concerning energy

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conservation. To this end, please send any comments you have, as well as specific suggestions for saving energy (remember, the heavy season for electricity consumption is summer) to:

Energy Task Force
American Association on Mental Deficiency
5201 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20015

We hope to be continually updating our principles, suggestions, and bibliography.

We sincerely hope that you find this document worthwhile.

Charles J. Fogelman
Manford A. Hall
Robert Jaslow
Richard C. Scheerenberger

I SOME PRINCIPLES OF DEVELOPING ENERGY CONSERVATION PROGRAMS WHERE RETARDED PERSONS MIGHT BE PARTICULARLY AFFECTED.

A. Any energy conservation program should take into account the particular programmatic and medical needs, and the usual activity level, of the retarded person or persons being served.

B. In overall planning, and in those instances in which cutbacks due to shortages in the energy supply occur, programs should be cut back last; staff activities and conveniences, including professional travel (other than for direct service), should be cut back first.

C. Before a decision is made to conserve in a particular way, and when you don't have such advice available, obtain the opinions of medical and energy-use experts. (The AAMD Central Office has some access to such sources of advice, and will be happy to refer any member who can't individually locate assistance; some contacts are listed in the bibliography).

D. Work together with others in your geographic area who serve people with other handicaps in the sharing of ideas and efforts.

E. Share your experiences in energy conservation with other members of AAMD -- through meetings, and through the Energy Task Force, which will be publishing regularly in Mental Retardation.

II A FEW SUGGESTIONS FOR CONSERVING ENERGY

(This is a very sparse list; consult the bibliography of materials for more ideas.)

A. Remember that saving energy means saving money.

B. Think adequate, not warm.

C. In residential, day-care, and educational facilities, assign one or two individuals, or perhaps a team consisting of a retarded person and a staff member, to monitor simple energy conservation measures. The experience of many people has

been that having someone particularly responsible for checking thermostat settings and light switches results in an immediate and considerable reduction in energy consumption.

D. Check your ventilation system; often unneccessary hot air is released and cool air heated in winter, and the reverse in summer.

E. Remember that long-range planning is even more important than are short-range, stop-gap measures.

F. Think about different types of clothing.

G. Do you really need all that lighting? Or such high-wattage bulbs?

H. Develop staff awareness and participation projects -- just knowing about the needs and means of energy conservation is a step in the right direction.

I. Combine staff efforts, especially at commuting and meal hours: People can pool their riding, why not their eating times and places?

J. Conserving all around can prevent severe cutbacks in specific places.

K. Place energy conservation signs ("Lights Out!") all over.

L. Combine programmatic activities where and when possible, if program quality does not suffer appreciably.

M. Tile floors are often both cold and unsanitary; think about industrial-grade washable carpeting.

N. Make a list of those places where energy conservation is impossible (or potentially dangerous), open to discussion, and easy to accomplish, and attack them in the reverse order.

O. It's likely that reducing a thermostat gradually will eventually permit a lower (in winter; higher in summer) ambient temperature level than would sudden changes.

P. The relationship between temperature and humidity is more important than temperature level itself.

Q. Insulate everything: Rooms, food, windows, people.

R. Write or call everyplace you can think of for energy-saving suggestions. Start by checking the bibliography which follows.

III BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. Primary References

1. The Economy of Energy Conservation in Educational Facilities. Educational Facilities Laboratories, Inc., 477 Madison Avenue, New York, New York, 10022. $2.00. An excellent, readable, background reference.

2. American Hospital Association "Guidelines for Health Care Institutions on Developing Policies and Procedures for Electrical Utility Source-Voltage

Reduction Conditions," and "Guidelines on Energy Conservation in Health Care Institutions." 840 N. Lake Shore Drive, Chicago, Illinois, 60611. Free. Very helpful for focusing on areas of potential saving and for identifying possible dangers.

3. Technical Options for Energy Conservation in Buildings. National Bureau of Standards, U. S. Department of Commerce, Washington, D.C., 20234. $2.35. The best all-around reference, especially for long-range planning.

B. Other people and places to write

1. Office of Energy Programs, U. S. Department of Commerce, Washington, D.C., 20230. For general information, both domestic and business-related. Ask for "How to Start an Energy Management Program" and "33 Money-Saving Ways to Conserve Energy in your Business."

2. Ms. Barbara J. Bland, Coordinator, Consumer Affairs, American Petroleum Institute, 1801 K Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20006. For information on petroleum derivatives; ask specifically about industrial conservation programs.

3. Mr. A. W. Innamorati, Assistant Commissioner for Buildings Management, Public Buildings Service, General Services Administration, Washington, D.C., 20405. Ask for bulletins regarding energy conservation in public buildings.

4. Edison Electric Institute, 90 Park Avenue, New York, New York, 10016. Contact: Jack Young, Vice President.

5. American Gas Association, 1515 Wilson Boulevard, Arlington, Virginia, 22209. Contact: Rhona E. Saunders, Consumer Public Relations.

6. On October 30, 1973, Senator Hubert H. Humphrey read into the Congressional Record a set of three-hundred energy-saving measures. They appear on pages S 19594-98 of that day's Record. You might also be able to get copies from Senator Humphrey's Office, 232 Old Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C., 20510.